

U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Western District of New York

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PRESS RELEASE

September 19, 2003

RE: UNITED STATES v. PERFECTO RICHIEZ-CASTILLO

United States Attorney Michael A. Battle announced today the sentencing of Perfecto Richiez-Castillo, age 39, of Rochester, New York, who pled guilty on May 2, 2003 to one count of engaging in a Continuing Criminal Enterprise, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 848, and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(h). Richiez-Castillo was sentenced by United States District Judge John T. Elfvin to 30 years imprisonment on the Continuing Criminal Enterprise conviction, and to 20 years imprisonment on the money laundering conviction, with the sentences to run concurrently. He was also ordered to forfeit \$79,940 in cash, which was seized by federal agents from his residence in March 2000, and \$79,000 in cash, which was seized by federal agents from couriers who were attempting to smuggle it out of the United States to the Dominican Republic. A judgment for \$12,000,000 was also entered against Richiez-Castillo, representing the proceeds of his drug trafficking activity.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph J. Karaszewski, who handled the case, stated that the defendant admitted at his plea to distributing over 150 kilograms of cocaine in

Rochester, Buffalo and Niagara Falls beginning in 1998 and continuing through March 23, 2000, when he was arrested by federal law enforcement authorities. He also admitted that on March 15, 2000, he arranged to have 2 couriers transport approximately \$79,000 from the United States to the Dominican Republic. The couriers were stopped by U.S. Customs Agents at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, as they were boarding a flight to the Dominican Republic with the cash hidden on their persons.

The conviction was the culmination of an investigation on the part of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service, the New York State Attorney General's Organized Crime Task Force, the New York State Police and the Rochester Police Department.

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